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Raf' ul-Hijaab 'Anil-Farq Bayna D'awah Ahl us-Sunnah Wa Da'wah Ahl ul-Bida' wal-Ahzaab

Uncovering the Difference Between the Call of Ahl us-Sunnah and the Call of the People of Innovation and the Sects¹

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PART I

THE TEXT

All praise is for Allaah, firstly and lastly and openly and in private. I testify that none is worthy of worship except Allaah, Guardian of the righteous. I also testify that Muhammad (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) is His servant and chosen messenger. Allaah showed mercy to mankind by sending him to this earth, and through him mankind's lives, wealth, and honor were protected. So therefore, we ask you Allaah to reward him for us with the best rewarded. You have given a prophet for his people or a messenger for his nation. O Allaah, we ask you to cause us to live upon his Sunnah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) and to die upon his Religion. And we ask you to allow us to drink from his *Hawd* (fountain), after which we will not thirst again.

In these pages, you will find an explanation of many of the differences between the Da'wah (Call) of Ahl-us-Sunnah (People of the Sunnah) and those other than them. The intention behind this is to clarify the high level that the Salafee Da'wah (Call To the Way of the Salaf) has. Thus, bringing those who adhere to it, to thank their Lord for having guided them to its path, for indeed, giving thanks for a blessing is part of knowing and acknowledging it.

I also intended from this to expose the inconsistencies of the other Da'waat (Calls), so that the Muslims can be warned about them, and so that they can pull back anyone who has fallen into them, while desiring salvation in this world and the Hereafter.

I have noted in the last part of this article of mine that it is an obligation to warn against being excessive and being lackadaisical. Among these differences is that which is a matter of correctness and that, which is a complete differing. So some of them differentiate between an adherent of the Saved Sect and an adherent of the doomed sects. And some of them differentiate between the completeness in the Da'wah (Call) and deficiency in it, even if all of them are from the Ahl-us-Sunnah. I also mentioned that those who attribute themselves

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to the Call of Ahl-us-Sunnah must look at where they stand with regard to these differences. I mean by this, how much from it they coincide with the truth. This is so that their ascription to it will not merely be a notion or just lip service. This is since the Sunnah is a methodology (manhaj) in beliefs, sayings and actions. I have only stated this in the introduction of this article due to the importance of this matter.

Question: In our time, the vain desires have grown to such an extent that many people are confused and are nor able to distinguish the one who is on the truth from the one who is upon falsehood. We would like for you to explain to us the clear signs by which we can distinguish the one who follows the methodology of Ahl-us-Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah from the one who follows the path of the people of innovation, desires, and sectarianism. This is so that we can know who the People of the Truth are, so we can follow their way and join their ranks, and so that we can know who the People of Falsehood are, so we can avoid them. May Allaah have mercy on the one who helps those that are worried and in need of clarification!

Answer: What was stated in the question is from the matters that are extremely important and from that which will provide benefit for the ummah. In the past, I spoke about many of these apparent signs that are found in the Da'wah (Call) of Ahl-us-Sunnah to the students of knowledge at Dar Al-Hadeeth in Ma'rib. So I will repeat what was said there, Allaah willing, while adding to that what I am able. Since the Ahl-us-Sunnah (People of the Sunnah) – in the past and in the present – have repudiated the sayings and the conditions of the deviants, and they have warned the ummah against their speech, I saw fit to follow their example in this regard.

I will mention what I recollect in my mind from that, while also giving attention to the situations that are new. This is especially since the people of knowledge – may Allaah have mercy on them – have already clarified and exposed for us the beliefs of the earlier sects. I wrote a separate treatise on that, entitled *As-Siraaj Al-Wahhaaj fee Bayaan al-Minhaaj*. May Allah benefit me with it in both this world and the next.

POINT 1. Ahl-us-Sunnah place the Qur'aan and the Sunnah as understood by the Righteous Predecessors (As-Salaf As-Saalihih) as the source or judgement, whether for themselves or against themselves. And they do not put anything before that, whether it is the intellect, customs, spiritual views (mukaashafah), intuitions (dhawq), dreams or a party (i.e. group). As for the other groups, then they place all these things as their source of authority over that of the Qur'aan and the Sunnah. So if there is anything in the Qur'aan and the Sunnah that contradicts or opposes that, they distort it or dismiss it. And if they are unable to do that, then they reject it, claiming that it contradicts the Principles, which in reality, are their own "principles." Or they claim that it is *Aahaad* or that it contradicts the interest of the Da'wah, i.e. their understanding of the Da'wah and not that of the Salaf of this Ummah. Allaah has shown mercy to the Ahl-us Sunnah with their stopping at the understanding of the Salaf As-Saalihih, while abandoning all other understandings.

POINT 2. Ahl-us-Sunnah make friendship and show enmity based on the methodology of Truth with justice and equity. But as for the others, then they make friendship with someone and show enmity to someone based on their desires and their party (group). Whoever agrees with them in what they are upon, he is made their close companion and is treated with respect, even though he may be a wicked sinner. And whoever opposes them,

then he is persecuted and shunned, even though he may be learned and pious. So it is as if whoever agrees with them is of the People of Badr: "**Do what you want, for I have forgiven you.**" and whoever opposes them, the plea of the intercessors will not benefit him.

POINT 3. The student of knowledge from Ahl-us-Sunnah gives importance to the Islamic sciences. This is made apparent from him in his traveling to the scholars so that he can benefit from their knowledge and good character. And they show concern for relying on what is established by legal (shar'i) proofs and for acting in accordance with Islamic knowledge. This is contrary to the innovators, for they warn against the sciences of the Sunnah and its adherents, and they detest the sciences of the *isnaad* and *athar*. And along with this, they encourage the students of knowledge to access only the newspapers, magazines, daily and weekly bulletins and so on. Ahl-us-Sunnah do not prevent people to do research in these items, however, to them, the greatest importance and concern lies in the Islamic sciences. As for other than them, if they have any concern with the Islamic sciences, it is to the extent of what serves their party or their call, or what is confined to belittling Ahl-us-Sunnah and vilifying their scholars. Allaah says: "**And the evil plotting does not fall on anyone except its own people (i.e. does who initially plotted).**" (35:43) And the Prophet (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam) said: "**Verily, actions are by intentions, and everyone will have that which he intended.**" [Reported by Al-Bukhaaree]

POINT 4. The adherent of the Sunnah (i.e. Sunni) - especially in the case of freedom of choice - is concerned with a comprehensive purification (*Tasfiyah*): in Beliefs (*Aqeedah*), in Worship ('Ibaadah), in writing and speech, and in aspects of the methodology and organization. Then his concern is that of training and development (*Tarbiyah*) upon this Islaam, which is purified from the defects, ignorance and deception that are attributed to it. As for the one who does not adhere to the Sunnah, then his motto is shallowness and being concerned with "how many" and not "how" in all that he does. And they consider the people of *Tasfiyah* and *Tarbiyah* as being extremists.

POINT 5. Ahl-us-Sunnah strive for their names and titles to be like those of their Predecessors, because they know that naming at first is an easy word, but in the end, it becomes a creed and a sect. So you see them calling themselves "People of the Sunnah and the Community" (Ahl-us-Sunnah wal Jamaa'ah), "People of Hadeeth" (Ahlul-Hadeeth), "The Saved Sect" (Al-Firqat-un-Naajiyah), "The Aided Group" (At-Taa'ifah Al-Mansoorah) and "The Salafees" (As-Salafiyyoon), and so on. As for the others, then they call themselves with the name that their leader or movement organizer chose for them, disassociating themselves from the aforementioned names, since they feel uneasy with them. May Allaah help us!

POINT 6. Ahl-us-Sunnah are just and fair with those who agree with them as well as those who oppose them. So they bear witness to the truth that is with those who oppose them - if there is a religious benefit in that – and they refute those amongst themselves who are in error – even if they may hold a high position amongst them. Their main concern in that is defending the Sunnah. As for those other than them, then they overlook the mistakes of their companions, even if it is in matters of Creed ('Aqeedah). Instead, they monitor and seek after the mistakes of their opponents, using that to vilify them, in spite of its ambiguity. So they seem to say: (in the words of the poet):

*"Looking with the eye of contentment at every fault is tiresome,
Just as the looking with the eye of discontentment reveals mistakes."*

POINT 7. The history of the Ahl-us-Sunnah's Da'wah (Call) is old and goes way back in the past. They are able to trace their Call back to what the Messenger of Allaah (sallallaahu alaihi wasallam), his Companions (May Allaah be pleased with them), and those who followed their guidance afterwards were upon. As for those other than them, then their Da'waat (Calls) began with their founders and directors. And perhaps some of them believe, whether they said it outwardly or hold it internally, that the guidance of Muhammad ﷺ - which is the best of guidance - is something that is not correct to refer back to in these times, even though "**The last part of the Ummah will not be set right except by that which set right its first part.**"

POINT 8. Ahl-us-Sunnah hold the belief of taking the methodology and the confronting of (situations and events) from the past (i.e. from the Salaf), while others say to take the methodology from the past (Salaf), but to apply the confronting (of events and situations) from the perspective of current times. By that, they mean the preoccupation in these times should be with rulers and their actions - not with issue of Allaah's Names and Attributes, except for that which will only protect it from being lost or forgotten. As for the Ahl-us-Sunnah, they give everything its due weight in accordance with what the Salaf were upon and what is in agreement with the principles of the Salaf in completing and attaining the benefits or repelling and lessening the evils.